

Chronic Wasting Disease in Wisconsin Deer

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WDNR began monitoring the state's wild white-tailed deer for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in 1999. Three positive deer were identified from Dane County through random testing of hunter harvested deer in November 2001. These WI index cases represented the first cases of CWD detected in wild white-tailed deer east of the Mississippi River. Over 40,000 wild deer were tested in statewide surveillance in 2002-03, and 205 CWD positive deer were identified in five southern counties. In 2003-04 nearly 15,000 deer were tested, of which 116 tested positive, bringing the total number of counties with a positive wild deer to nine.

Almost 19,000 wild deer have been tested during the 2004-2005 season to date. Results indicate that CWD is infecting deer in western Dane-eastern Iowa counties, and adjacent portions of Sauk, Richland, Green, Lafayette and Columbia counties; and in what maybe a separate introduction in the southeastern areas of Rock, Walworth, and Kenosha counties adjacent to an outbreak in four northern Illinois counties. Although this is an extensive area, the disease appears highly clustered with more than 80% of positive deer in a 126-mi² area bounded by Spring Green, Mazomanie, Black Earth, Mount Horeb and Ridgeway. Analysis of the sex and age composition of positive deer has shown that very few fawns are infected; only 7 out of more than 6000 tested to date. The prevalence of the disease increases with age CWD surveillance and monitoring helps the state further understand and control the spread of this disease.

Table 1. *Wisconsin CWD Surveillance in 2004-2005 (as of 9 March 05):*

DNR Zone	# Sampled	# Analyzed	Positive for CWD
Disease Eradication Zone	10,472	10,391	115
Herd Reduction Zone	7,567	7,544	8
Remainder of Wisconsin	786	746	1
Total Sampled Statewide	18,825		
Total Analyzed Statewide		18,685	
Total Positive Statewide			124

For more detailed and updated CWD information, check the WDNR CWD website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/whealth/issues/CWD/index.htm>